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Where Vigilance Is Needed

There has been a lot of talk about the comparable positions of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., in missile development. Obviously, however, what really needs the greatest scrutiny and perhaps "agonizing reappraisal" is in the field of the relative effectiveness of the "intelligence" forces of the two countries. And the simple dictionary definition of the word, as well as its implications in espionage, are both involved.

Reports from Washington on Friday said that the Defense Department's high command was to meet to hear a report on the present serious situation from General C. P. Cabell, deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Many Americans, however, are increasingly convinced that what is needed is a real report on C.I.A. and not another—after the catastrophe—report from C.I.A.

Yesterday State Department spokesmen were indignant in their reports of what had been done by the agents of Russia and Red China. Such indignation may well be justified in a highly moral world. But in a safe America what we need to know is what our own agents have been doing while the Russian and Chinese agents have been getting away with diplomatic murder. The United States in properly realistic terms no longer pretends that it is above the business of undercover and skyhigh "intelligence" work all over the world. We are spending millions on all kinds of agents everywhere—and properly so. Yet time and time again, our "intelligence" has come only after it could be put to no intelligent use.

In Europe the Communist press, of course, has been ju-

bilant over the Japanese developments. Other papers are sympathetic toward the United States, but most of them agree that U.S. prestige has suffered a heavy blow. The most pertinent statement, however, was in the form of a question by *The New Zurich Times* of Switzerland.

"Can the greatest world power," it asked, "afford many more such emergency landings?"

How long are we going to be left to walk into traps by a Central Intelligence Agency, which has failed time after time before but which still apparently conceals not only its operations but its ineptitude under a cloak of complete secrecy. Of course, we cannot carry on our own espionage and other gum-shoe operations in a gold-fish bowl. The lives of men and high stakes for the nation depend upon operations under the cover of security. Still, if the American people cannot be told what C.I.A. is doing, they are too often in shock and surprise shown what the C.I.A. is failing to do.

Not only in indignation but in simple good sense we may attribute to Communist agents wicked acts to injure us in Japan, Turkey, Egypt, Korea, Cuba. The more important fact is that they are succeeding in these acts and often to our complete surprise. And that means that in the undercover world, the Communists are succeeding where we are failing, despite our outpourings of treasure and arms.

The disaster in Japan increases the need for vigilance. And the place where vigilance seems most needed now is not on the coast of Asia but in the shrouded C.I.A. offices in Washington, D. C.